



U.S. Department of Justice
Drug Enforcement Administration

Washington, D.C. 20537

AUG 29 2002

Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
United States House of Representatives
231 W. Lafayette, Suite 669
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Dear Congressman Conyers:

Thank you for your letter of August 22, 2002, concerning a meeting on marijuana legalization efforts held by the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) Detroit Division.

I understand your concerns, and I appreciate this opportunity to provide you more information about the meeting. As mandated by Congress, DEA works closely with other law enforcement agencies, community coalitions, drug prevention groups, and treatment providers to educate the public about the dangers of drugs. Public education about the harmful effects of controlled substances, particularly those listed in Schedule I, is a vital part of the DEA's mission and an important tool for reducing demand in this country.

As part of that ongoing effort, our office in Detroit called for a meeting with our enforcement, prevention, and treatment partners in response to initiatives being considered in Michigan and other states, in order to evaluate these efforts and impact on drug law enforcement and carefully consider how we should respond. While I generally support treatment alternatives for non-violent offenders with addiction problems, it is important to have drug testing and accountability in the program. There is a concern that the Michigan initiative will not provide effective treatment because there is little accountability.

I assure you that the DEA personnel involved in this meeting are aware of congressionally imposed restrictions on lobbying activity. Indeed, DEA's Office of Chief Counsel reviewed the planned meeting in advance and determined that it did not violate any restrictions, and one of our attorneys attended the meeting and briefed attendees about these restrictions. We will ensure that our efforts fall within these mandates.

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.

Page 2

Your concerns are very appropriately stated, and if you wish to discuss this matter further, I would be happy to meet with you or your staff. Thank you again for writing. I look forward to working with you and the other members of the Judiciary Committee in our country's fight against drugs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Asa Hutchinson", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Asa Hutchinson
Administrator